PHIL 1500

Reading, Writing, and Reasoning

Fall 2020

Sections 002, 003, 004

Video lectures will be posted on *Monday* every week.

Instructor

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays *11:00am – 12:00pm* on Zoom. Zoom meetings can also be made by appointment.

Course Description

In this course we will analyze the concept of personal identity from a philosophical perspective. Most of us take for granted the idea that we have an identity as a person, and that this identity is maintained over time, as we grow and change, from birth to death. We will consider and challenge some philosophical principles that aim to shed light on how it is that we can be the same person over time while experiencing such change. This analysis of *personal identity* will provide the substance with which we will hone our philosophical reading, writing, and reasoning abilities.

This course is specifically geared toward improving our general ability to read, write, and reason. As such, this course will cultivate your ability to: (i) construct arguments that entail or support their conclusion using a variety of philosophical strategies, (ii) critique arguments offered by others, such as those you may encounter in discussion or in popular media, (iii) perform rhetorical analysis on a text to identify its author, audience, and rhetorical strategy, (iv) give constructive feedback to others on their work and, most importantly, (v) see yourself as a contributor to humanity's ongoing intellectual discussion. These skills are portable and will benefit you whether or not you continue to pursue formal studies in philosophy.

This class fulfills the First-Year Written Communication core requirement. In accordance with that requirement, by the end of this course you will be able to: distinguish the structural components of sentence and paragraph writing; express and synthesize your ideas coherently,

frame an argument according to your purpose, audience, and subject-matter; and develop strategies for generating, revising, and proof-reading your work.

Required Reading

PW *Philosophical Writing*. (4th ed.) Martinich. ISBN: 978-1-119-01103-6

PI *Personal Identity*. (2nd ed.) Perry. ISBN: 978-0-520-25642-2

Supplemental readings can be found on the course canvas page in the 'Supplemental Readings' folder.

Assignments

All assignments should be submitted for blind grading. This means that Response Papers and Argumentative Papers should NOT include names.

Response Papers (40%). You are required to complete eight (8) exegetical summaries of the assigned philosophical readings (i.e. readings from **PI**). These summaries should be around 1-2 pages long and should:

1. Identify the author's central thesis or conclusion
2. Summarize the basic argument for this claim or the main reasons given
3. Propose an original response to the argument. If you agree, say why; if you disagree, give a reason.

Response papers are due on the *final day of the week for which the reading was assigned*. These assignments should be submitted on the course canvas page under 'Response Papers' for the appropriate week. You are limited to one response paper per reading. Given the assignment structure of the course, it may be wise to complete these summaries early in the semester.

Argumentative Papers (60%). You are required to complete two argumentative papers, each worth thirty (30) percent of your grade. Five (5) percent of this grade will be awarded for workshop activities for your first paper to class during Week 7. A first draft of the first paper will be due on Week 8 while a revised draft of the first paper will be due on Week 11. Another five (5) percent of this grade will be awarded for workshop activities for your second paper during Week 14.

Submission of your Argumentative Papers should be done on the course canvas page at the modules tab underneath 'Argumentative Papers'. Papers are due before 11:59pm on the established due date.

Papers will be graded in accordance with *Grading Rubric(s) for Philosophy Papers*. The grading rubric can be found on the course canvas page 'modules' tab, underneath 'Argumentative Papers'.

Late Assignments

I count an argumentative paper as late if it is submitted after 11:59pm on the established due date.

Computer crash or theft is not a legitimate excuse (you should be using a service like Dropbox to backup your schoolwork. Turning in the wrong version of a paper is not a legitimate excuse (double-check that you have turned in the right version).

Any assignment that is late will receive a deduction of one grade step per day it is late. [For example, a work that would have otherwise earned a B will drop to a B- after one day, C+ after two days, C after 3 days, etc.]

Writing Expectations

This class focuses on the process and mechanics of writing. As such, I will be grading your grammar, syntax, and mechanics strictly.

You are attending a state research university and writing in Standard Written Academic English (SWAE) is a skill that all university graduates ought to possess. If your ability to write SWAE is not up to par, you have some options: the university offers courses on academic composition, there is a university writing center that would be glad to work with you on any of your compositions, and I am happy to help you work on improving your writing.

I am grading you with the expectation that you can competently use SWAE. Writing that is of poor quality will be graded as such.

If you are a non-native English speaker or experience other language barriers please let me know at the beginning of the semester and we can discuss how to move forward in this course.

What Does a Philosopher Look Like?

Like many disciplines in the academy, philosophy has historically been dominated by white men. Stereotype threat is a psychological phenomenon that causes people to underperform in a discipline in the face of a stereotype that says that "people like them" aren't good at that discipline. However, telling students that there are no actual differences in performance in a class can defuse the anxiety that the stereotype creates and subsequently undermines those tendencies to underperform. The stereotype that says that only white men can be good philosophers is false.

For more on this, visit: http://looksphilosophical.tumblr.com/

On Seeming Smart

Regardless of whether you've studied philosophy prior to this course, you might often find yourself feeling intimidated by the way philosophers write or talk. This might be because philosophy, like all disciplines, employs its own jargon and concepts that you either might not have encountered before, or that you might have seen used differently. Jargon can be useful, but it can also be used to exclude people and make them feel like they don't have a place in the conversation. Don't feel that way and don't be intimidated!

If you don't know what a term means, ask for a definition. If you don't know how a concept is being used, ask for clarification. For a very helpful essay that speaks to this (among other important things) see "On Being Good at Seeming Smart":

http://schwitzsplinters.blogspot.com/2010/03/on-being-good-at-seeming-smart.html

University Policies

Classroom Behavior

Both students and faculty are responsible for maintaining an appropriate learning environment in all instructional settings, whether in person, remote or online. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. For more information, see the policies on classroom behavior and the Student Code of Conduct.

Requirements for COVID-19

As a matter of public health and safety due to the pandemic, all members of the CU Boulder community and all visitors to campus must follow university, department and building requirements, and public health orders in place to reduce the risk of spreading infectious disease. Required safety measures at CU Boulder relevant to the classroom setting include:

- maintain 6-foot distancing when possible,
- wear a face covering in public indoor spaces and outdoors while on campus consistent with state and county health orders,
- clean local work area,
- practice hand hygiene,
- follow public health orders, and
- if sick and you live off campus, do not come onto campus (unless instructed by a CU Healthcare professional), or if you live on-campus, please alert CU Boulder Medical Services.

Students who fail to adhere to these requirements will be asked to leave class, and students who do not leave class when asked or who refuse to comply with these requirements will be referred to Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. For more information, see the policies on COVID-19 Health and Safety and classroom behavior and the Student Code of Conduct. If you require accommodation because a disability prevents you from fulfilling these safety measures, please see the "Accommodation for Disabilities" statement on this syllabus.

Before returning to campus, all students must complete the COVID-19 Student Health and Expectations Course. Before coming on to campus each day, all students are required to complete a Daily Health Form.

Students who have tested positive for COVID-19, have symptoms of COVID-19, or have had close contact with someone who has tested positive for or had symptoms of COVID-19 must stay home and complete the Health Questionnaire and Illness Reporting Form remotely.

Accommodation for Disabilities

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the Disability Services website. Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition, see Temporary Medical Conditions on the Disability Services website.

Preferred Student Names and Pronouns

CU Boulder recognizes that students' legal information doesn't always align with how they identify. Students may update their preferred names and pronouns via the student portal; those preferred names and pronouns are listed on instructors' class rosters. In the absence of such updates, the name that appears on the class roster is the student's legal name.

Honor Code

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code (honor@colorado.edu); 303-492-5550). Students found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found at the Honor Code Office website.

Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct (harassment, exploitation, and assault), intimate partner violence (dating or domestic violence), stalking, or protected-class discrimination or harassment by members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or cureport@colorado.edu. Information about the OIEC, university policies, anonymous reporting, and the campus resources can be found on the OIEC website.

Please know that faculty and instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, dating and domestic violence, stalking, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about options for reporting and support resources.

Religious Holidays

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. Let the instructor know if you require accommodations for religious observances and they will be provided.

See the campus policy regarding religious observances for full details.

Course Schedule – Subject to change at instructor's discretion. You will be informed when any changes occur.

PW - Philosophical Writing ; **PI** - Personal Identity

	Topic	PW	PI	Other
Week 1 **08/25**	Introduction to Class Introduction to Topic	Introduction	Ch 1: John Perry – *The Problem of Personal Identity* (Pgs. 3-12)	Supplementary Reading: Boonin – *A Defense of Abortion (*Section 1.2)
Week 2 **09/01**	Rhetorical Analysis: Author, Audience, Purpose	Ch 1: Author and Audience	Ch 2: John Locke – *Of Identity and Diversity* (Pgs. 33-52)	Supplementary Reading: Weinberg – *Locke on Personal Identity*
Week 3 **09/08**	The Structure of an Argument: Premises, Inferences, Conclusions	Ch 3: The Structure of a Philosophical Essay	Ch 6: Thomas Reid – *Of Identity* (Pgs. 107-112) Ch 7: Thomas Reid – *Of Mr. Locke's Account of Our Personal Identity* (Pgs. 113-118)	
Week 4 **09/15**	How to Read Critically: Accuracy and Strategy	Ch 9: How to Read a Philosophical Work	Ch 10: David Hume – *Our Idea of Identity* (Pgs. 159-160) Ch 11: David Hume – *Of Personal Identity* (Pgs. 161-172)	
Week 5 **09/22**	The Measure of an Argument: Validity, Soundness, Cogency	Ch 2: Logic and Argument for Writing		
Week 6 **09/29**	How to Compose a Philosophy Paper	Ch 4: Composing	Ch 13: Bernard Williams – *The Self and the Future* (Pgs. 179-198)	Paper 1 Assigned

Week 7 **10/06**	Paper 1 Draft Workshopping	Ch 8: Some Problems with Introductions		Paper 1 Peer Workshop Due
Week 8 **10/13**	Arguments and the Writing Process		Ch 15: Thomas Nagel – *Brain Bisection and the Unity of Consciousness* (Pgs. 227-243)	Paper 1 Due
Week 9 **10/20**	How to Appropriately Communicate the Author's Thoughts	Ch 7: Some Goals of Form	Ch 14: Derek Parfit – *Personal Identity* (Pgs. 199-215)	Draft Comments Returned
Week 10 **10/27**	How to Appropriately Convey Evidence	Ch 6: Some Constraints on Content	Ch 14: Derek Parfit – *Personal Identity* (Pgs. 215-220)	
Week 11 **11/03**	Argumentative Strategy: Distinctions, Dilemmas, and *Reductio ad absurdum*	Ch 5: Tactics for Analytic Writing		Paper 1 Rewrite Due
Week 12 **11/10**	Argumentative Strategy: Definitions, Scenarios, and Counterexamples.	Ch 5: Tactics for Analytic Writing	Ch 16: Sydney Shoemaker – *Persons and their Pasts* (Pgs. 249-263)	Paper 1 returned
Week 13 **11/17**	Argumentative Strategy: Analysis and Dialectical Reasoning	Ch 5: Tactics for Analytic Writing	Ch 16: Sydney Shoemaker – *Persons and their Pasts* (Pgs. 263-277)	Paper 2 assigned
Fall Break – Don't Come to Class, You Will Be Sad				
Week 14 **12/01**	Paper 2 Workshopping			
Week 15 **12/08**	Wrap-up			Final Paper due
Finals:				